

Well Now

Spring, 2003



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

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Peace of Mind

By Annie Dochmahl

Common experience reveals that we often tune out events or issues that we feel helpless over. After all, we have only so much energy and time to devote to our learning and passions. As the spring issue of Well Now goes to press, US involvement in international war remains a daunting reality. Regardless of our individual political views, most would agree that this time in history adds additional anxieties to an already stressful life. Having friends and loved ones being shipped out for possible combat and concerns about safety while traveling take a large toll on our hearts and minds. Along with this is the sorrow over the destruction that humanity wrecks as we try to solve conflict with violence rather than with diplomacy. Combine the frustrations and helplessness that many students feel over how our nation conducts itself overseas, with the every day stressors of being a college student.

How can we maintain perspective without either sinking into despair or checking out completely? Fortunately our community has abundant opportunities and resources for fostering peace of mind amidst turbulent times.

Start with the basics

Remembering basic self care is essential during stressful times. What we know when we are well, we can lose sight of when we are feeling low. Regular physical activity is a wonderful antidote to stress and blues, as it requires deep breathing, increases circulation and can be a form of relaxation as well as invigoration. Preparing and eating wholesome meals, including fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes can help fortify our bodies as well as serve as reminders that we are worth caring for, regardless of the madness around us. Regular sleep, drug use in moderation or not at all, staying hydrated, enjoying nature, cultivating love...all the standard practices of sound health are perhaps even more critical during times of increased stress.

Support on campus

The UO Counseling Center offers one on one and group counseling for stress related difficulties. Students can drop in to schedule an appointment or call 346-2770.

Check out their web site at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~counsel/re->

sponse.htm for information on topics such as

- *Coping with Terrorism*
- *Tips for College Students to Cope with Disasters*
- *Promoting a Healthy Recovery*
- *Emotional Health Issues for Victims*

Public safety also has information posted on their website (<http://safetyweb.uoregon.edu/>) regarding emergency procedures. These resources are not intended to increase the alarm on campus, but to provide appropriate response to uncertain times.

Peace activism

There are numerous campus and local groups that meet regularly to organize peace activities. Being involved in peaceful solutions can be an excellent antidote to war related despair. Check out any of the following for starters.

- *UO students for peace* (<http://gladstone.uoregon.edu/~sfpeace>) organize on campus.
- *Beyond War 2003* (gaylelandt@att.net) is a non partisan organization to change thinking and ways to resolve conflict
- *Eugene peace works* (<http://www.efn.org/~eugpeace/>) is aligned with Oregon Peace Works.

International Student Perspective: How students can deal with added concern

By Mika Kim

A university is a place where a world of ideas co-exist. At UO, this world of ideas includes students from all over the world. Did you know that approximately 7% of the UO student body is international students? As you romanticize how wonderful it would be to have an educational adventure of this sort, consider some of the stressors faced by today's international students.

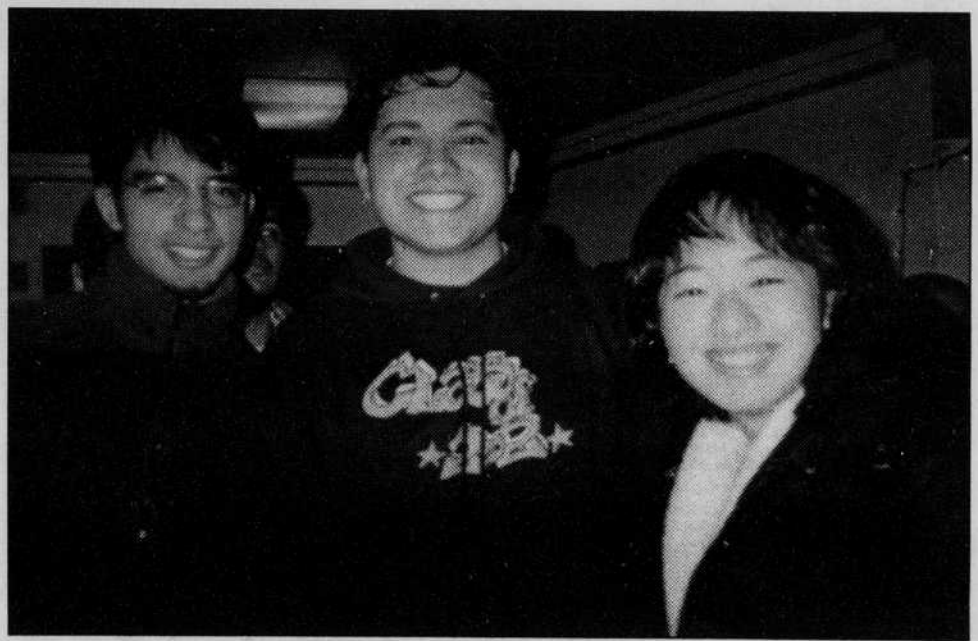
In addition to the general stress that their domestic classmates face (finances, studies, relationships, etc), international students are adjusting to a new culture. Learning a new language can add to the difficulty of cultural adjustment. On top of this, since September 11th, Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) has made stricter visa regulations on international students and scholars. This has impacted UO international community by causing uncertainty, confusion and fear for many.

Recognizing the difficulties international students face, the UO Counseling Center offers some helpful suggestions for dealing with stress and uncertainty. First of all, acknowledge your thoughts and feelings. Then, reassure yourself that your feelings are normal and legitimate. You might feel sad, lonely, angry or confused. It is OK to feel the way you feel! Ask yourself, "What would be helpful for me right now?" And seek help. Remember, talking to someone is a sign of strength and can help you feel like you are taking care of yourself!

As an international student from Japan, I have learned the power of talking about what I am going through. Even though it is tempting to keep my unpleasant feelings to myself, I have found that talking with others is very helpful. When I miss home or get stressed, I talk to my boyfriend or friends. A sense of connection and sharing my feelings with someone through discussion helps me keep a healthy perspective.

Here are some useful resources for all international students.

- *The Counseling Center is located on the 2nd floor of UO Health Center. Edel Davenport leads a weekly group for international students for free. During this weekly meeting, students share their experiences and concerns, explore their beliefs, and talk about their changing roles in their new environment. According to Edel, by participating in the group, international students learn to reduce their stress, develop more confi-*



International students enjoy each other's company during the International coffee hour, every Friday.

dence in their ability to communicate in English and become more comfortable with speaking-up during classes. The Counseling Center can be reached at 346-3227.

- *Office of International Program (OIP) will answer questions or concerns regarding new visa and address regulations and academic issues. They are at 346-3206.*
- *International Student Association (ISA) has coffee hours every Friday at 4:30 pm at EMU tea lounge above the post office. This is a great opportunity to meet new people from other cultures. Everyone is welcome.*
- *International Student Health Series: A free workshop series at the health Center. Wednesdays 5-6pm: April 30 (stress reduction), May 14 (tobacco cessation), May 28 (contraception). Call 346-0562 for info.*

International students have many ways to make our overseas experience rich. Do not hesitate to seek out additional resources to further connect us with each other.